

A new species of *Lepidochrysops* Hedicke (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) from South West Africa (Namibia)

by

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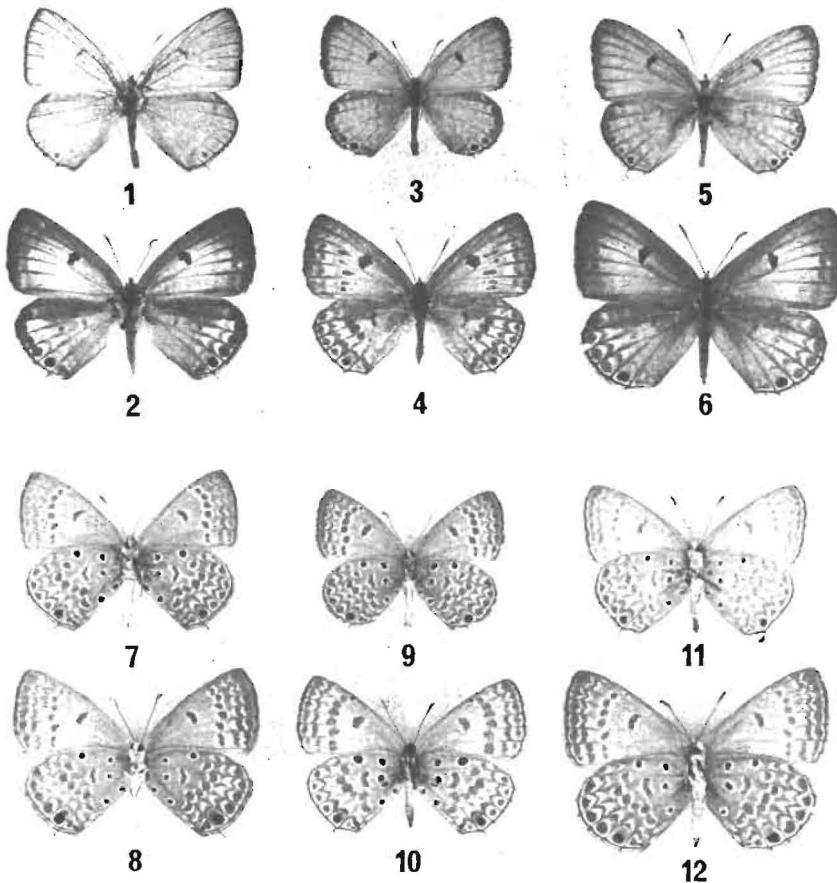
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Lepidochrysops michellae from South West Africa (Namibia) is described, and
notes on its habits and distribution are given.

In recent years, increased collecting in South West Africa (Namibia) has led to the discovery of several new species of butterflies. This species was first brought to our attention by Mr J. Braine in 1975 who found it flying with *Lepidochrysops chloauges* (Bethune-Baker) near Kombat. Unfortunately, too few specimens were available to draw up a satisfactory description. In 1978, Dr J. B. Ball caught a number of specimens near Mashare, about 50 km east of Rundu. It is from this additional material that the following description is made.

***Lepidochrysops michellae* spec. nov., figs 3-4, 9-10, 13, 16-17, 20.**

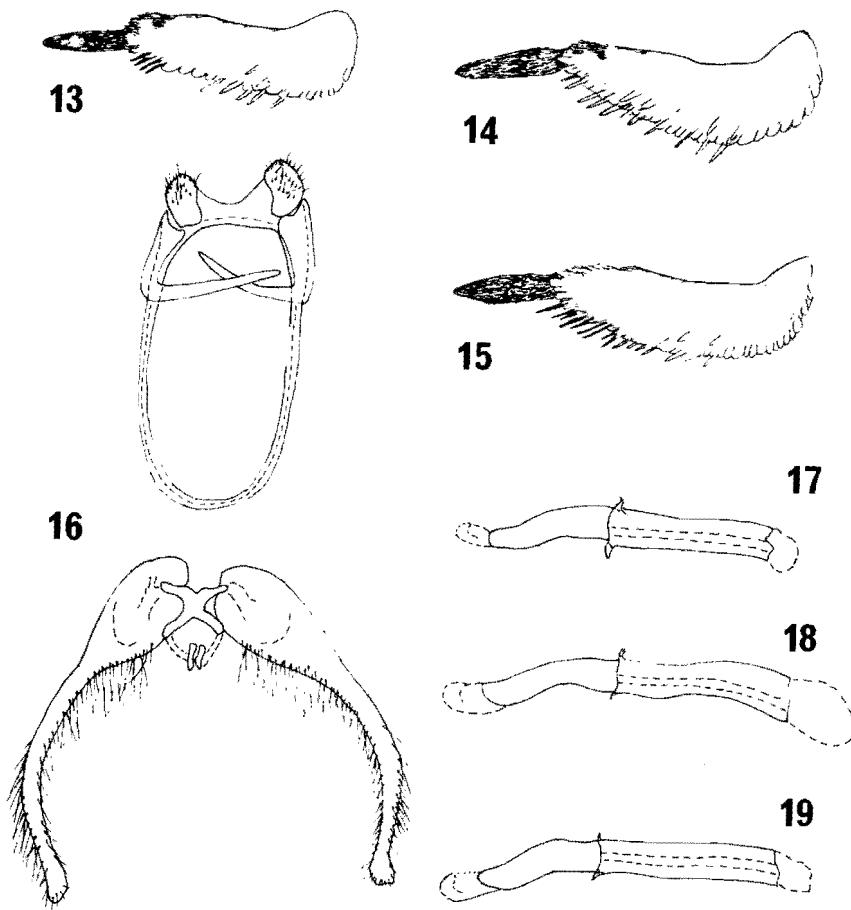
MALE. Similar to *L. chloauges* (Bethune-Baker) and *L. glauca* (Trimen) but wing shape more rounded. Upper side ground colour pale silvery blue to greenish blue, much paler than and between the colours of *L. chloauges* and *L. glauca*. Fore wing outer margin dark grey and wider than either *L. chloauges* or *L. glauca*, becoming broader at the apex; discocellular spot prominent. Under side ground colour paler than *L. chloauges* or *L. glauca*, dark markings thus more prominent. Palpi (Fig. 13) third segment proportionally shorter than second in comparison with *L. chloauges* (Fig. 14) and *L. glauca* (Fig. 15). Genitalia (Figs 16-17) with aedeagus shorter in comparison with the valves and posterior section of aedeagus longer in proportion to the anterior section than in *L. chloauges* (Fig. 18) and *L. glauca* (Fig. 19). Androconia (Battledore scales) almost fig-shaped (Fig. 20), appreciably different from those of *L. chloauges*, almost rectangular (Fig. 21) and *L. glauca*, oval and flattened somewhat across the top (Fig. 22). The stem is also considerably less than half the length of the scale, while in *L. chloauges* and *L. glauca* the stems are proportionally much longer, being more than half the length of the scale.



Figs 1-12. *Lepidochrysops* species. 1-6. Upper side. 1. *L. glauca*, ♂. 2. *L. glauca*, ♀. 3. *L. michellae*, ♂ holotype. 4. *L. michellae*, ♀ paratype. 5. *L. chloauges*, ♂. 6. *L. chloauges*, ♀. 7-12. Under side. 7. *L. glauca*, ♂. 8. *L. glauca*, ♀. 9. *L. michellae*, ♂ holotype. 10. *L. michellae*, ♀ paratype. 11. *L. chloauges*, ♂. 12. *L. chloauges*, ♀. (Photographs by W. M. Morrison).

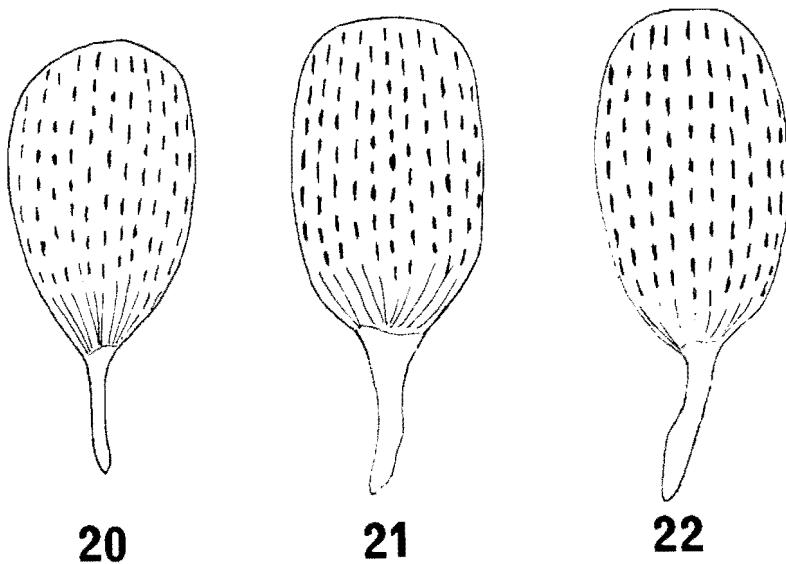
FEMALE. Most similar to *L. chloauges* and *L. glauca* but ground colour a pale greenish blue and dark markings larger and more extensive; a row of prominent discal spots usually present on fore wing; under side as in male.

MALE HOLOTYPE. Fore wing length: 14,2 mm; antenna-wing ratio: 0,40. *Palpi*: second segment with white scales, apex with a few brown scales and some black ribbon-like scales; third segment shorter than second, acuminate with dark brown scales.



Figs 13–19. Palpi, lateral view. 13. *Lepidochrysops michellae*. 14. *L. chloauges*. 15. *L. glauca*. ♂ Genitalia. 16. *L. michellae*, uncus, subuncus, tegumen and vinculum above, valves and lower fultura below. Aedeagus, lateral view. 17. *L. michellae*. 18. *L. chloauges*. 19. *L. glauca*.

Wings, upper side: Fore wing uniform pale silvery blue with a slight greenish tinge, a relatively broad grey marginal line, a broad dark grey discocellular mark closing cell, otherwise unmarked. Hind wing uniform pale silvery blue with a greenish tinge, marginal area with a fine dark grey line, a row of six greyish brown submarginal spots, except that in cellule 2 which is black, proximally edged with orange. *Wings, under side:* Fore wing ground colour uniform pale brownish grey; a fine dark grey marginal line edged proximally with white; submarginal area with slightly transversely elongate light brownish grey spots, spot in 1b divided longitudinally by white scaling; postdiscal area with roughly chevron-shaped brownish grey marks curved parallel to outer margin and



Figs 20-22. Androconia. 20. *Lepidochrysops michellae*. 21. *L. chloauges*. 22. *L. glauca*.

separated from submarginal spots by chevron-shaped white marks with the apices inwards, postdiscal marks proximally edged with conspicuous broad chevron-shaped white marks; discal area with seven brownish grey more or less rounded spots of unequal development and relatively smoothly curved parallel to outer margin, spot in 1b with signs of longitudinal division, spot in 2 slightly proximad of others, discal spots edged proximally and distally by a broad white line; broad discocellular brownish grey line closing cell and margined by a broad white line. Hind wing ground colour uniform pale brownish grey; marginal border a fine dark brown line edged proximally with white; submarginal row of six rounded brownish grey spots, spot in 1b not demarcated, spot in 1c longitudinally divided by a white streak along the interneural fold and posterior half with a small black centre which is thinly scaled along the distal edge with metallic emerald green, spot in 2 prominent and black with metallic green scaling along distal border, submarginal marks proximally edged with narrow chevron-shaped marks which are white except orange in 1c and 2; postdiscal area with narrow brownish grey chevron-shaped marks roughly parallel to outer margin and edged proximally with a narrow white line; discal area with an irregular row of seven rounded brownish grey spots except black in 1b and 7, spots in 1b and 7 also more proximad than the others; discal spots edged proximally and distally with white; cell closed by a broad brownish grey discocellular mark edged by white; subbasal area with a row of three rounded black spots ringed with white in 1a, 4 and 7, and a smaller indistinct spot in 3. Cilia greyish white above and brownish grey below. *Androconia* (Fig. 20) almost fig-shaped, well arched distally, tapering off rapidly proximal to the attachment stalk (stem); eleven rows of vertical reticulation placed somewhat closely together. *Genitalia* (Figs 16,

17): Uncus of two lobes laterally fused to tegumen; subunci long and curved, tapering to apex; vinculum wide; lower fultura of two small arms fused to base of valves; valves curved and elongate with oval bases, dilated at apex with a slight hook; aedeagus cylindrical, ensheathed by conical anellus, with tip oval and divided, vesica with very fine cornuti. Valves and uncus with long fine hairs.

MALE PARATYPES. Fore wing lengths: 14,0–18,5 mm; antenna-wing ratios 0,38–0,42. Wings, upper side with ground colour pale silvery blue to pale greenish blue, submarginal spots of hind wing often reduced to two in 2 and 6, and orange edging of spot in 2 more or less extensive than holotype; under side generally similar to holotype.

FEMALE PARATYPES. Fore wing lengths: 14,5–17,5 mm; antenna-wing ratios 0,36–0,39. *Wings, upper side.* Fore wing light greenish blue becoming brownish grey along costa; marginal area with a broad brownish grey line; brownish grey postdiscal area edged proximally and distally with white in 1b–6; discal area with an irregular row of 5 dark brownish grey spots in 1b–6 of variable development, spot in 1b occasionally divided longitudinally into two, in one specimen the anterior one is further divided transversely into two; discocellular patch large, dark brownish grey and encircled with white. Hind wing light greenish blue becoming greyish brown in 6 and 7; marginal area with a fine brownish grey line; submarginal area with six rounded brownish grey spots encircled with white, spot in 2 prominent with metallic green scaling along distal border of black centre and distally edged with orange; discal area with eight dark brownish grey, very broadly chevron-shaped, marks edged proximally by white; discal area with a row of four dark brownish grey spots, that in 2 very small; cell closed by a narrow dark brownish grey discocellular line. *Wings, under side:* Similar to holotype, but white edging to discal and postdiscal spots on both fore and hind wings more extensive, almost meeting in some specimens. Cilia greyish white above and greyish brown below.

MATERIAL EXAMINED. ♂ Holotype: SOUTH WEST AFRICA. Mashare, 8.ii.1978, Dr J. B. Ball. Paratypes: 4 ♂, same data as holotype; 8 ♂, 2 ♀, same data but 5.ii.1978 (2 ♂), 10.ii.1978 (1 ♂), 13.ii.1978 (1 ♂), 23.ii.1978 (1 ♂), 9.iii.1978 (1 ♂), 16.ii.1978 (1 ♂), 20.iii.1978 (1 ♂, 1 ♀), 17.iii.1978 (1 ♀). Also seen 1 ♂, 1 ♀, South West Africa, Kombat, 9.ii.1975 (J. Braine); 2 ♂, South West Africa, Grootfontein, 8.ix.1972 (D. M. Kroon). The holotype is in the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria; paratypes are in the collections of W. H., S. F. and G. A. Henning (Florida, Transvaal), Dr J. B. Ball (Cape Town) and the Transvaal Museum.

DISTRIBUTION AND HABITS. This species inhabits the north-eastern areas of South West Africa. It is never plentiful. At Mashare it was found in grassland adjoining riverine bush. Flight is brisk and wandering, rather similar to that of *L. glauca*. Specimens appear to be on the wing from January to March.

This species is named after Miss Michelle Ball, the daughter of Dr J. B. Ball.

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